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***Statement of Congressman Brad Carson
Hearing on the continued viability of the United States
air transportation system***

Washington, D.C. --

Thank you Chairman Young and Ranking Member Oberstar for holding this hearing and providing us the opportunity to examine this critical legislation. As we are all aware, the horrible events of the last week have dealt a devastating blow to many elements of life as we knew it in the United States before the morning of September 11, 2001. This tragedy has many, many aspects.

With regard to our nation's transportation system, we now face two basic issues as we move forward in the weeks and months after this tragedy. We must make sure that American travelers feel safe and secure when traveling in the United States and abroad, and that the aviation industry is economically viable so that it can continue to support Americans traveling for business and pleasure. I believe our government has a role to play in supporting and preserving our transportation industry. We are here today to attempt to begin to deal with the economic survival of the aviation industry and make sure that our country does not allow terrorists to change our deeply valued way of life.

Aviation is vital to life in the United States. As we have seen this past week, stopping all air travel has a tremendous impact on lives all across the country, from those traveling to return home to loved ones, others traveling for business, and many of the critical, potentially life saving items shipped each day through our aviation system.

We cannot allow terrorists to limit our ability to travel within our free country or they will have won. They will try to do this by scaring us out of the skies and in turn by decimating our aviation industry. We cannot allow this to happen.

Our goals for this nation's transportation infrastructure have not changed since the horrible events of one week ago; the focus has only intensified. We must make sure our transportation infrastructure is safe, secure, and reliable and allows all Americans to enjoy the freedom to travel, conduct business and industry and see our wonderful country. While we still do not know the long-term impact this may have on the aviation industry, as well as the travel industry and economy as a whole, today we are taking the

first step to make sure we preserve this freedom and as well as secure a vital element of our economy.

United, Continental and US Airways, some of our nation's larger air carriers, as well as Boeing, have already announced they will have to reduce their schedules and lay off thousands of employees. The impact of this event will not only be felt in our aviation industry, but is going to have an effect on aviation companies around the world. By acting now, we send a message to everyone around the world that we will not allow this to happen and we will do what we must to secure our economic strength and preserve the American way of life.

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